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HANDLING INDICATOR

TO : Department of State

DEPARTMENT OF STATE A/COS, MR
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PORTIONS DENIED AS INDICATED

DEPARTMENT OF STATE
BUREAU OF
INTER-AMERICAN AFFAIRS

JUL 16 1971

FROM : Amembassy, GUATEMALA

DATE: July 12, 1971

SUBJECT: INTERNAL SECURITY: Monthly Report of Incidents, June 1971

REF :

SUMMARY: For the first time since last January, the monthly total of press-reported incidents of possible political violence decreased, although there are indications that the GOG issued instructions to the press to reduce political violence coverage. Nonetheless, the June total of 126 incidents, including 55 killings, was still well over twice the monthly rate prior to the mid-November, 1970 State of Siege implementation. The GOG launched a number of anti-terrorist operations -- at least 10 subversives were killed, but 25% of June's incidents were possibly attributable to the far Left, including the kidnappings of two prominent Guatemalans, up to nine attacks against security forces, and 18 propaganda-bomb reports. South Coast and Eastern Region violence carried in the newspapers also declined somewhat from last month's record highs, although bands of heavily armed men remained active. In noteworthy court actions, lengthy jail sentences were handed down to two Guatemalans convicted under anti-subversive laws and a high level member of the FAR was consigned to the courts. Some upper class concern has surfaced over recent kidnappings. END OF SUMMARY

Actions Attributable to the Far Left

Terrorist involvement is suspected, but not confirmed, in most of the nine assaults this month conducted against security personnel (see also South Coast and Eastern Region sections). Two youths with 9mm pistols shot and killed Army Reserve Colonel Filadelfo CASTILLO Mansilla June 4 as he was dropping his children off at school (GUATEMALA 2412). Unknowns killed ex-GRUDEP (El Peten Police Force) commander Capt. Nicolas ESTRADA Vallejos in an ambush in El Peten. Terrorists killed two National Police-men and wounded two others in a machinegun pass at a Mixco police post, (Guatemala Department), but police killed one of the attackers.

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Otherwise there were six other incidents including attacks against Solola and Palencia National Police posts, where two other National Policemen were wounded.

Eighteen propaganda-bombs were reported in the June press a number considerably higher than in past months this year. Eleven exploded in the Departments of Guatemala, Santa Rosa, Chiquimula, Retalhuleu, Suchitepequez, and San Marcos. Security forces reportedly dismantled seven more before they exploded.

Terrorists appear also to have participated in the kidnappings of three prominent Guatemalans: Jorge BOTRAN who was reported kidnapped June 1, then released for a ransom two days later; 17-year-old Rene DAVILA Ardon, who was kidnapped by the "FAR" in Suchitepequez for a "Q200,000 ransom" but managed to escape his captors; and well-known German businessman Gunther KOPLOWITZ, who was kidnapped June 10, then released several days later for a reported Q100,000. As is customary both Botran and Koplowitz denied their kidnappings to the press.

The Embassy is unable to confirm far Left involvement in these three cases from independent sources.

Security Force Actions

The press reported four significant police-initiated actions against Communist terrorists in June, which resulted in the deaths of six subversives. On June 8 security forces, following up a lead, entered a Zone 18 PGT/FAR safehouse. The 3rd Chief of Detectives of the National Police and two other policemen as well as two guerrillas died in the action (GUATEMALA 2490). The following morning, the Army Public Relations Office reported three more guerrillas who escaped from the safehouse were killed nearby.

On June 12, security forces entered a capital house and shot and killed Juan Jose ARAGON Barillas, who had escaped from the May, Zone 5 bus shoot-out.

At the end of June, the press reported the capture of two terrorists in a Zone 1 gunfight. Based on press-reported deaths 10 middle-level terrorists were killed in June including the brother of missing university student and subversive Humberto OVANDO Urquizui. Security forces lost six including three National Policemen.

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South Coast

Bands of unidentified men remained very active on the South Coast, and were involved in many of the 15 press-reported deaths. Victims included a Spanish-born Suchitepequez landowner (mid-June), a Retalhuleu military commissioner (June 30), a common delinquent, and four campesinos. Workers reportedly saved another Suchitepequez landowner and his wife from a kidnap attempt at the end of June. Three more campesinos were kidnapped in San Marcos and six wounded in various South Coast attacks. Impacto on June 4 commented on the violent zone around Tiquisate (Escuintla) and the lack of a police presence, and observed that the Supreme Court has assigned a forensic doctor to the area because of the high number of cadavers appearing there. Previously, these were transported 160 kilometers to Escuintla for the required judicial examination.

Eastern Region

Northeast violence totalled 17 deaths including several known personalities. Assassins killed the ex-GRUDEP chief June 5 (see above), two northeast cattlemen, a Zacapa auxiliary mayor, a Jutiapa businessman, a Zacapa military commissioner, a Zacapa rural school instructor in front of his student, and a Jalapa campesino.

Press Restrictions

The government issued public instructions to the press to reduce its coverage of violence on the eve of the mid-June international cotton conference.

Disappearances, Other Kidnappings, and Court Exhibitions

The 13 reported kidnappings (including Botran, Davila, and Koplowitz above) and eight disappearances this month were well below the May totals. In two cases, relatives blamed the National Police for the kidnappings and in three others, victims were identified as students. Court exhibitions during the State of Siege reached the total of 533 individuals requested, 14 of which were subsequently found dead, 47 released, 96 produced but still detained, and 376 missing.

Court Actions Against Terrorists

There were two noteworthy court actions this month: a FAR courier, arrested in early 1969, was sentenced to seven years in prison under the Law of the Defense of Democratic Institutions on June 12.

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and another sentenced to a 10-year term for detonating a fragmentation bomb in 1968 near a National Police Station and belonging to a clandestine organization. In addition, journalist and sometime university student Carlos SOTO Rosales, the highest level terrorist ever publically acknowledged detained by the Arana Government, was consigned to the courts June 13 and charged with the January, 1971 murder of the military policeman (PMA) assigned to the British Consulate [REDACTED] GUATEMALA 232). Police claim Soto admitted belonging to the FAR; but report he said it was "coincidental" that when police detained him, he had the .45 caliber submachinegun used to kill the PMA. Soto is suffering from a severe eye disorder and in mid-June was moved to the Police hospital for treatment. At the end of the month, a PMA and the driver of newspaper-owner Clemente MARROQUIN Rojas were consigned to the courts, charged with the murder of the half-brother of Guatemala City's mayor Manuel COLOM Argueta in an action which appears more and more non-political. Finally, because of a lack of evidence and contradictory testimonies by policemen involved in the detentions, five variously charged with illegal possession of war materiel, clandestine propaganda, and bomb detonations, were released.

Some Upper Class Concern Over Recent Violence

The Koplowitz kidnapping, following soon after then Guillermo IBARGUEN kidnapping-murder, has increased fear among the wealthy classes. The Ibarguens, as the Koplowitz', are contemplating leaving the country. The Agricultural Association (AGA) published June 17 a condemnation of the Ibarguen murder, stating "the triumph of forces which seek the economic-social collapse of the country ought not be permitted."

COMMENT: June marked the fourth consecutive month of a high number of security force operations against the far Left, but, by and large, the press-reported, high level of terrorist hit-and-run attacks against security forces, Communist propaganda distribution, and kidnappings of wealthy Guatemalans which have plagued the country since last September, continue. The hasty elimination of terrorists (i.e. the press-reported June 12 killing of Aragon [REDACTED] and the too-often brief and elementary interrogation procedure may cause short-run operational slowdowns in the FAR and PGT/FAR but is not conducive to destroying the organizations.

On the other hand, the two terrorist convictions this month, termed "extraordinary" by one court official to an Embassy officer, are the first such lengthy sentences handed down under the Arana Administration. Guatemalan courts [REDACTED]

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usually have tossed such cases out often because of conflicting testimony of police witnesses and the otherwise inability of the GOG to present a good case. The case of Soto

test this government's capability to prosecute, for the first time, an important guerrilla. WILL

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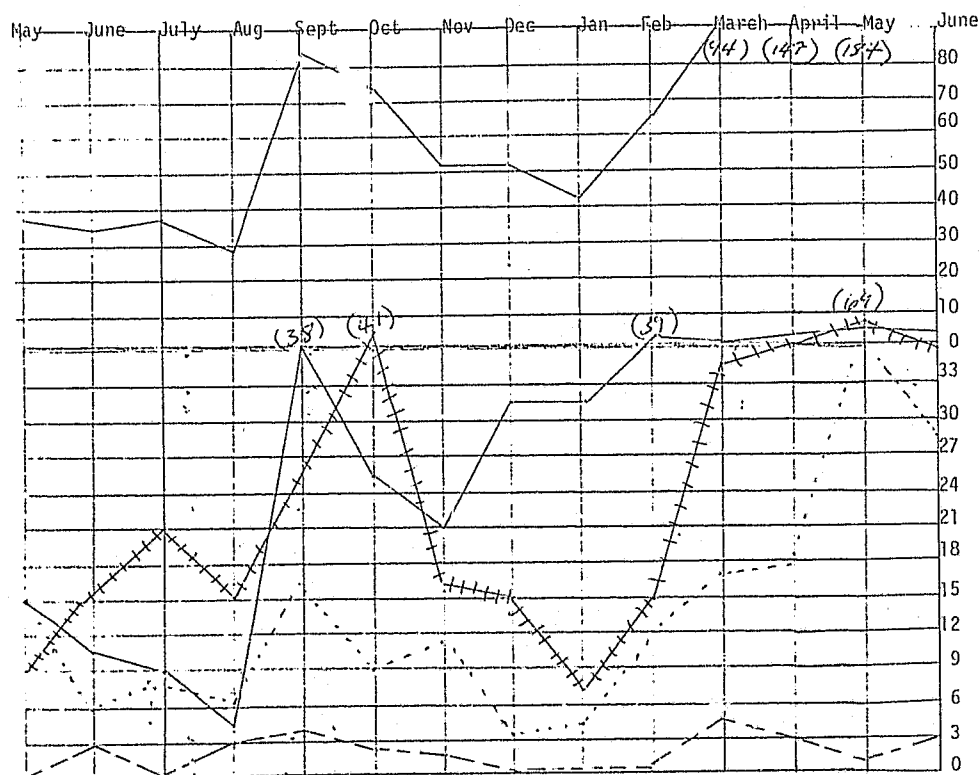
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Guatemala

MONTHLY FREQUENCY OF TERRORIST RELATED INCIDENTS BY REGION (1) - June 1970 - June 1971



Total - 126

Capital 53(2)
South Coast 39(3)

Eastern Region 29(4)

Highlands 3 (5)

1. For purposes of this graph, acts of violence include shootings, bombings, and assassinated bodies.
2. Capital area: Sacatepequez, Guatemala
3. South Coast: San Marcos, Quezaltenango, Retalhuleu, Suchitepequez, Escuintla, Santa Rosa
4. Eastern Region: Jutiapa, El Progreso, Jalapa, Zacapa, Chiquimula, Izabal, El Peten
5. Highlands: Totonicapan, Chimaltenango, Huehuetenango, El Quiche, Baja Verapaz, Alta Verapaz, Solola